

On 4th December there were several on the same beach and on 19th February, 1961 there were four of them together, all apparently fully adult birds which was also the case with a specimen seen on 31st March. A year later, on 25th February, 1962, there were "rather many" at different places along that same beach and on 9th August, 1962 there were two on the shore between the Kumbe and Maro Rivers. With the exception of both these latter birds, which were passed at very close range, all observed specimens could not be approached within gun-range so that I did not succeed in obtaining one.

Van den Assem (1) mentions the species for the first time for New Guinea: on 16th April, 1958 he observed a single bird along the beach near the mouth of the Kumbe River in the neighbourhood of a small flock of *Gelochelidon nilotica*.

Though the Gull-billed Tern (*Gelochelidon nilotica*) can be found along the coast as well as more inland—it is of common appearance in Kurik's ricefields—the Caspian Tern was only observed along the beach.

#### 42. *Anous minutus* Boie

White-capped Noddy

"Islands in the tropical Pacific Ocean from the New Guinea region and Queensland to the Tuamotu Group" is the range as indicated in Mayr's list, which may be correct, because I, too, know this tern from rocky islands far away from larger land masses. I observed the species on 24th July, 1962 in a rather strange habitat *viz.* along the muddy bank of the Maro River in the immediate neighbourhood of Merauke's harbour! This may be the first record from New Guinea's continent, though Rand (15) mentioned the species from Daru and Mabaduan, localities quite close to the shore of east New Guinea's south coast.

After having observed this bird at close range for a considerable time which enabled us to identify it without the slightest doubt, it flew low above the water to the middle of the Maro River alighting on a place where a second specimen was discovered.

These, in my opinion, were very strange surroundings for this noddy and no doubt an exceptional case, though an employee of Kurik's Rice Estate whom I know as a keen observer of birds told me that he had seen a similar behaviour—sometimes of several together—on different earlier occasions.

(to be continued.)

### Notes on the African Finfoot, *Podica senegalensis* (Vieillot) and the Chilean Torrent Duck, *Merganetta a. armata* Gould

by A. W. JOHNSON

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I feel that the differences in the habits and behaviour of *Podica* and *Merganetta* are just as striking as the similarities<sup>(1)</sup>. Some of these are:

*Merganetta*, apart from its remarkable efficiency in navigating "white" water is an expert diver while *Podica* is evidently extremely reluctant to do so.

*Merganetta* feeds exclusively below the surface, *Podica* while floating on it.

*Podica*, hugs the banks and when surprised away from cover will "freeze motionless alongside a rock with nothing but the top of the back showing above the water". *Merganetta* never does this (as far as I know) and rather than hug the bank spends most of the day on or around some favourite stone or rock near the middle of the river or stream where the current is running strongest. For *Merganetta* two is certainly not the usual clutch (I suspect the clutch cited by Phillips was incomplete) but rather 3-5 if the eggs and broods of young so far recorded or observed are to be regarded as typical of the species.

In *Podica* the vestigial claw is used for climbing. This is not the case—at any rate I have never seen any such indication in *Merganetta*. I agree with Whiteley's and Crawford's statements that the facility with which they scramble up the slippery surfaces of water-lashed rocks or rounded stones is indeed marvellous but the wings are not used in this process and my impression (not yet proved) is that it is accomplished by a combination of the stiff tail and a vacuum-creating effect of the webbed toes.

*Merganetta*, as far as is known, always nests in holes and in true duck fashion buries the eggs in its own down. The nest of *Podica* is evidently completely different.

Reference:

<sup>1</sup> Pitman, C. R. S., 1963. *Bull. Brit. Orn. Club*, 83, (7) 127-132.

## A New Zealand Scaup x Tufted Duck

by BRYAN L. SAGE

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The New Zealand Scaup, *Aythya novae-seelandiae* (Gmelin) is a species found only in New Zealand, Auckland and Chatham Islands. It made its appearance in waterfowl collections in Europe and America only comparatively recently and is still far from numerous in captivity.

There are no authentic records of hybridization between this and other species of ducks either in the wild or, until recently, in captivity. The only previously published record of hybridization involving the New Zealand Scaup concerns a cross with the Pochard, *Aythya ferina* (Linn.) which is mentioned in the *Ninth Annual Report of the Wildfowl Trust*, and is repeated by Gray (1958). Mr. S. T. Johnstone of the Wildfowl Trust informs me that this record is in fact incorrect and that the parentage of the hybrid in question was *Aythya ferina* x *Aythya marila*. The Wildfowl Trust did not receive any New Zealand Scaup until 1958.

The present paper describes the previously unrecorded hybrid of New Zealand Scaup x Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula* (Linn.). This hybrid, which was prepared as a study skin in November 1962, is an adult male in full plumage now in my collection. The bird was bred in captivity and wild hybrids of this parentage are not of course to be expected as the geographical distribution of the two species does not overlap, either during the breeding season or in the winter.

### DESCRIPTION AND MEASUREMENTS

In order to facilitate easy comparison the plumage characters of the hybrid, together with those of the males of New Zealand Scaup and Tufted Duck, are given in tabular form:—